September 4, 2019

Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, OSTP
Dr. France Córdova, NSF
Dr. Francis Collins, NIH
Washington, DC

Dr. Chris Fall, DOE
Dr. Michael Griffin, DOD

Dear Drs. Droegemeier, Collins, Córdova, Fall, and Griffin:

As leading science, engineering and international education organizations – representing hundreds of thousands of scientists, engineers and educators around the world – we recognize the need to maintain a balance between an openly collaborative scientific environment and protecting our economic and national security. However, that balance will be compromised if actions are implemented that take an overly broad approach to addressing a critical issue at the forefront today, rather than a more targeted response. Any response should consider the impact on both the overall scientific enterprise and on individual scientists and its development should include the input of the science and engineering community.

Our organizations and members are witnessing an escalating concern among U.S. and international scientists that new policies and procedures under consideration to minimize security risks will have the unintended effect of harming the scientific enterprise. Many scientists—both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals—who properly follow codes of conduct, regulations, policies and laws, may inappropriately be harmed in response to the misconduct and illegal actions of others.

As you know well, for more than half a century, the U.S. has been the undisputed global leader in science and technology. This leadership is due, in large part, to the U.S. ability to attract scientists and students from around the world, who make countless contributions to the global scientific enterprise. Scientific progress and U.S. economic development have been vastly accelerated by bringing international minds together and has helped to drive innovation and discoveries in cancer and genetics, the physics of gravitational waves, advancements in green chemistry, improving food safety, and other significant contributions.

Recent events make clear that scientific integrity and security concerns are compelling the federal government—both Congress and the Executive Branch—to revisit policies and procedures regarding foreign nationals who study, work or collaborate with U.S. scientific and academic institutions.

While we must be vigilant to safeguard research, we must also ensure that the U.S. remains a desirable and welcoming destination for researchers from around the world. Finding the appropriate balance between our nation's security and an open, collaborative scientific environment requires focus and due diligence.

We ask that you consider a wide range of stakeholder perspectives as your agencies work together through the new NSTC Joint Committee on Research Environments to develop policies and procedures that address issues related to international researchers' participation in the U.S. scientific enterprise, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

American Anthropological Association
American Association for Anatomy
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Immunologists
American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM)
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geosciences Institute
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Society
American Meteorological Society
American Nuclear Society
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Society for Cell Biology
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Human Genetics
American Statistical Association
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists
Biophysical Society
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Crop Science Society of America
Ecological Society of America
Entomological Society of America
Federation of American Scientists
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Geological Society of America
Institute of Food Technologists
Institute of Mathematical Statistics
International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Cave and Karst Research Institute
New Mexico Academy of Science
New Mexico Geothermal LLC
New York Academy of Sciences
Paleontological Society

Parapsychological Association
Research!America
Social Science Research Council
Society For Biomaterials
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM)
Society for Neuroscience
Society for the Study of Evolution
Society of Toxicology (SOT)
Soil Science Society of America
The International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE)
The Oceanography Society
OSA—The Optical Society
Western North American Region (WNAR) of the International Biometric Society (IBS)

cc: Lisa Nichols, OSTP
Rebecca Keiser, NSF
Michael Lauer, NIH
Bindu Nair, DOD
Lisa Porter, DOD
Shawn Sullivan, DOE